



Applying to College for DACAmented and Undocumented Students

Immigration status does not determine your ability to get into college. Applying to college is a long and tedious process but with patience and guidance any one can apply.

Spring Junior Year- August before Senior Year

Step 1: Take the SAT during Spring of Junior year or Fall of your Senior year. It's a good idea to take it twice to ensure you submit the highest scores. Some schools "super score", which means schools take the best scores from each test and section. You can look at the dates and apply for a fee waiver on the College Board Website. There are also free practice test online and free videos on SAT strategies on Youtube. Establish relationships with teachers and guidance counselors for college recommendation letters, you will need one of each later on.

August before Senior Year

Step 2: Depending on your grades and SAT scores, you should start to make a list of schools you might be interested in attending . Make a 3 section list of Safety, Target and Reach schools. A safety school is where your academic scores exceed the average students admitted. A target school is where your academic scores meet the average of students admitted. A reach school is a school where your grades are lower than the average student admitted. Based on your list , you should try to visit or look up information about the campus and student life. Some schools provide travel diversity programs for low-income students to visit for free.

Step 3: You should have a list of schools that consists of CUNY schools, SUNY schools and private schools. CUNY and SUNY both have different online portals for applications. Most Private Schools us the Common Application or Common App. For all of these online applications there is a fee. Most NYC public schools give fee waivers for low income students in applying to CUNY and SUNY schools. The Common App. also provides a fee waiver but you must apply online. If you need a fee waiver, don't be afraid to ask as soon as possible as they are limited and are first-come, first -served. All of applications open in August, so try to apply and do your research as soon as possible. You should also check for in-state tuition for undocumented students if you are applying out of state. In NY state, all students are allowed to receive in-state tuition if they have attended a NY State high school for 2 years. New York State program for a General Equivalency Diploma (GED or TASC) applicants upon completion can also apply for In-State tuition.

Step 4 : Once you are done with your list and started to apply, check with your teacher and guidance counselor to request a letter of recommendation. Look for a teacher that knows you well and was your teacher your Junior year or second semester of Sophomore year.

November - December

Step 5 : The deadlines for each school and application are different. Make a deadline calendar to ensure you submit everything on time. Some schools ask for personal essays or an essay answering a specific prompt. Each school as stated before is different and you need to make sure you have done extensive research. Knowing what to write and revising your essay can be hard but you don't have to do it alone. Ask an English teacher or someone who is knowledgeable in essay writing to edit your essay.

Step 6 : Some schools will ask you for income verification to determine your eligibility for scholarships and for their records. You will need to apply for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application. If you have DACA you can use your provided Social Security to apply, but if your parents don't have one, then you must put 000-00-000 for the SSN part and you must print out the signature page from the online FAFSA so that your parents can sign it and send it in. Undocumented students are eligible to apply if they do not have social security number, but must print out application and mail it in and use all zeros as your SSN. You can still send income verification through the College Board CSS profile. DACA and undocumented students can apply for this form without needing a social security number. This is free if you receive SAT fee waivers or based on your family income and tax forms. Remember documented and undocumented students are not eligible for Federal Financial Aid money.

Step 7 : Once you have compiled everything together, apply before Christmas since the application deadlines are at the end of December and early January. This will give you time if there is anything that has not been processed. Some schools will add you as an International Student, which is not the best route. You will need to pay extra for tuition and application fees. Call the school to explain your situation, if you are not comfortable ask someone you trust to advocate for you, but self-advocacy is needed to go through this process.

January-April

Step 8 : Once you have submitted everything by December, start looking for scholarships that can help you fund your college career. As a DACA or undocumented student, you are not allowed to receive Federal aid. As of the writing of this guide, NY State does not allow state aid for undocumented and documented students. Don't let money stop you from applying to college.

Step 9 : Private schools give the most money than public universities. You can apply to scholarships regardless of your status. If the scholarship does not mention anything about citizenship, you should apply. Many organizations provide scholarships depending on demographics or interest. Apply to as many as you can, you never know. There are a lot of scholarships out there for undocumented students you can download the DACA Scholars app on the App and Play Store. This app posts scholarships on a monthly basis and you can click on the link and it brings you to the application's website.

May-June

Step 10 : At this point, you should've received acceptances and denial letters from colleges. Choosing a college is as hard as applying. You should not only consider the academic factors but the social ones as well. The school environment can impact your studies. You can visit the schools you are considering in choosing and call for more information. Some colleges have tours for accepted students and provide info sessions for students to ask questions. In the end, you will make the ultimate decision and you should pick the school that you feel you will thrive and succeed in. For more information about the college process or FAFSA/CSS application you can contact Tania Mattos at UnLocal.



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